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ABSTRACT

This final report describes the activities and outcomes of Project BESTT (Bilingual/ESL Special Education Teacher Training), a federally-funded program that provided training to 25 certified special education teachers selected from four rural school districts currently serving bilingual, minority group elementary children with disabilities. The immediate goal of the training program was to provide participating school districts with a quality trained cadre of bilingual special education personnel able to meet the unique cross-cultural and special education needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students in public school settings. The 25 participants included 7 Caucasians, 16 Hispanics, and 2 Native Americans. Two of the participants have an identified disability. The Project BESTT training curriculum involved the integration of bilingual, English as a Second Language (ESL), and special education course work into a 36 semester-hour, interdisciplinary, competency-based program of study leading to the Masters of Arts degree in Bilingual/Special Education. The program of study included a field experience. An evaluation of the training found that post-training scores of participants were higher on measures evaluating awareness of the educational needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students than teachers who had not participated. An appendix contains information on teacher competencies, course work, and training curriculum. (CR)

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Bilingual/ESL Special Education Teacher Training

Project BESTT (H029E50009)

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ABSTRACT

There is a demand in our country for Bilingual/Multicultural Special Education Programs that adequately address the needs of culturally and linguistically different children. The need to prepare school personnel with training necessary to meet the arduous needs of this group is a challenge facing public schools today. Project BESTT was developed in response to a national need to prepare teachers for the emerging field of Bilingual/Multicultural Special Education. The project was initiated Spring of 1996, and culminated activities in Fall, 1998. Twenty-five teachers from four school districts participated in the training.

INTRODUCTION

A cursory review of the literature in the field has clearly identified a critical need in our country for Bilingual/Multicultural Special Education. Few districts have integrated or coordinated bilingual/special education programs. In addition, the literature has also suggested that there are very few (if any) teachers with the unique training in Special Education **and** Bilingual/ESL Education necessary to effectively meet the needs of children from diverse cultural and linguistic environments who are disabled. These children are known as 'Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional (CLDE).' Many of the nation's teachers working with CLDE children today have provisional licensure in Special Education or Bilingual Education. Special Education/Bilingual Education teachers are virtually non-existent in America's public schools today. Though some schools have gradually increased their numbers of specially trained personnel in these areas, the demand overshadows the supply. As a result, it is difficult for most public schools to adequately provide services to this unique population of disabled children, which apparently is growing in numbers. For example, research has shown that approximately 978, 000 Limited English Proficient children are in special education programs in the United States today. In addition, research also suggests that United States population is projected to increase by 12.3% by the year 2000; 60% of this projected increase will be among Hispanics. New Mexico ranks eighth in total Hispanic population. Ten school districts in New Mexico reported a 70% increase in Hispanic enrollment between 1992 and 1994 academic year. Serious concern has been expressed, therefore, by experts in the field regarding the importance of including culture and language in the instruction of bilingual children, particularly those with mild disabilities. The inclusion of culture and language in the educational program appears to be an example of sound educational practice.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Project Participants:

Project BESTT provided training to twenty-five certified special education teachers selected from four rural school districts currently servicing a large number of bilingual, minority group disabled children in an elementary public school setting. The 25 candidates were recommended by their respective school district. Thirty-three teachers were initially recommended by the schools, however, 3 did not qualify for the Graduate Program at Western New Mexico University, 2 were lost to attrition, and 3 relocated to other states because of employment prospects of the husband. The final list of candidates consisted of 21 females and 4 males; 7 White, 16 Hispanic, 2 Native American. Two of the participants have an identified disability. Project BESTT participants are currently enjoying the role of 'valuable resource professional' and, as a result, serve as consultants in the target schools. Project BESTT participants continue collaborative efforts with each other, colleagues, administrators, and parents.

Project Goals:

The Project identified four goals important to the implementation of the Project. These goals were task analyzed into specific program objectives.

#1. Expand and enhance a Bilingual/ESl preservice teacher training program for certified Special Education Teachers:

a. established an advisory committee to provide direction, advice and guidance to the project.

b. work with individual school districts to recruit Hispanic participants for the project from the four target schools. Native American and Anglo will also be considered.

c. develop and conduct a graduate level program of study leading to a Interdisciplinary Masters Degree in Bilingual/Special Education.

d. conduct on-site training practicums in the target schools for participants working with CLDE students.

#2. Provide target schools districts with trained teachers for CLDE children:

a. assist participants in developing the project competencies using course work, including field experience.

b. implement a practicum field experience in the host target schools for participants working with CLDE students.

#3. Develop dissemination activities of the project:

a. present at conferences (local, state, national & international)

b. assist participants in providing inservice workshops in host school district, as well as providing technical assistance to the university(ies) upon request.

c. Publish project activities in professional journals.

These goals and objectives were accomplished between Spring, 1996, and Fall, 1998. . Some dissemination activities are still on-going. Drs. Rodriguez and French have presented Project BESTT information at six conferences (state, national, international). In addition Rodriguez and French have published research obtained from Project BESTT in five different journals. It is anticipated that dissemination activities will continue.

Project Training Curriculum:

The Project BESTT training curriculum involved the integration of Bilingual, ESL and Special Education course work into a 36 semester-hour, interdisciplinary, competency based, program of study leading to the Masters of Arts degree in Bilingual/Special Education. A major focus of the training involved providing participants with specific teaching competencies essential to the education of CLDE children. The program of study included a field experience. The immediate goal of the training program was to provide participating school districts with a quality trained cadre of bilingual special education personnel able to meet the unique cross-cultural and special education needs of CLDE students in public school settings.

Project Evaluation:

Analysis of Project BESTT's Program evaluation was intended to measure the effectiveness of the three-year teacher training program. A component of the evaluation consisted of 12 attitudinal questions designed to measure teacher perceptions of the nature and extent of services within the rural southwest public school system, and relevant to the special education needs of the ethnic minorities within the four school districts. Toward this end, a 'pre' and 'post' administration of Howard University modified questionnaire was distributed to the Project BESTT candidates (experimental group, N=25), and participating teachers (control group, N=67) from the local school districts. The pre-test was administered during the Spring, 1996 semester, while the post-test was administered Fall, 1998 (**Note: A new group of teachers from the participating school districts were used in the post-test evaluation (N=67)**. The pre-test results showed no significant differences between teachers and Project BESTT candidates regarding awareness of the educational needs of CLDE children. Overall post-test results showed that the Project BESTT candidates had a greater awareness of multicultural, bilingual, special educational issues than those teachers in their district. The Chi Square analysis of the data revealed significant differences (.05) between the two groups on many of the items. Clearly, these data not only identified critical factors useful in developing multicultural, bilingual special education teacher preparation programs, it showed the effectiveness of the programs training as well.

SUMMARY

Project BESTT was developed in response to a request (RFP) from the USDOE-Personnel Preparation Unit for training personnel in Bilingual Special Education. The project was initiated Spring, 1996, and culminated Fall, 1998, when all twenty-five participants received their Master of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Studies (Bilingual/Special Education) during commencement ceremonies. The apex goals and objectives of the Project were all successfully met. At present, steps have been initiated by the university to establish a graduate level teacher preparation program in Bilingual/Multicultural Special Education. This program proposal has received support at the department level and university administrative level at large. The key feature of this proposal is Project BESTT.

Project BESTT wishes to acknowledge the contributions provided by various professionals and organizations. Without their assistance, technical and otherwise, Project BESTT would not have been realized. Thank you to;

ALLIANCE 2000 PROJECT - VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

THE BUENO CENTER - UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO at BOULDER

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SILVER CITY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT
SILVER CITY, NEW MEXICO, 88061

APPENDIX

Teacher Competencies for Teaching CLDE Children

Project BESTT Training Course Work

Training Curriculum

Teacher Competencies for Teaching CLDE Children (BUENO CENTER, 1996)

1. Teachers are able to develop and adapt culturally and linguistically appropriate curricula for CLDE children.

2. Teachers are able to use various special education techniques appropriate to the mainstreamed CLDE child.

3. Teachers are able to diagnose and prescribe appropriate instructional programs and remedial/compensatory procedures for various types of needs among CLDE children.

4. Teachers are able to work effectively with special education personnel in implementing special education techniques and intervention strategies.

5. Teachers are able to develop or adapt special education materials for CLDE children in regular special education classroom settings.

6. Teachers demonstrate ability to communicate sensitively with CLDE students.

7. Teachers demonstrate knowledge of causes and contributing factors for each CLDE exceptional child.

8. Teachers can identify or describe various exceptional characteristics of CLDE children.

9. Teachers are able to work effectively with CLDE resource personnel.

10. Teachers are able to integrate and apply skills and knowledge acquired in field experiences with CLDE child.

COURSE TITLE	COURSE CONTENT
Methods of Research	The course will focus on methods of research as it applies to the field of bilingual special education. Students enrolled in the course will be provided in-depth knowledge of current research methods in the field.
History and Philosophy of Ed	This course will provide students the opportunity to explore psychological and legal issues related to meeting the needs of culturall and linguistically diverse exceptional children.
Psychology of Multicultural Learning	Students will be provided opportunities to examine the psychological principles of the learning processes as it relates to bilingual children with disabilities.
Issues in Bilingual/Multicultural Ed.	Familarize the students with the various topics on current demands/ needs in the field of bilingual/multicultural education settings as they relate to CLDE children.
Second Language Theory, Methods and Materials	Students will explore second language acquisition theory as it applies to language development. Specific teaching methods and materials for the CLDE student will be examined.
Methods in Language Instruction	Specific and current teaching methods, especially those which are effective with CLDE children will be examined. Students will be provided opportunities to use methods in real classroom situations.
Introduction to ESL	The philosophical framework for second language acquisition will be explored. A review of current literature in ESL methodology will be explored and discussed.
Culturally Diverse Learning Disabled Handicapped Children	An in-depth study of handicapping conditions will be explored. Emphasis will be placed on strategies for meeting the educational needs of students who are culturally diverse. Methods and materials will be thoroughly discussed.
Culturally Diverse Emotionally Handicapped Children	Strategies for meeting the needs of the culturally diverse, emotionally handicapped child will be discussed. Methods and materials for working with emotionally handicapped students will be explored.
Multicultural Assessment Techniques	Assessment strategies will be explored as they apply to CLDE students. Assessment techniques in the areas of language and other academic areas will be explored.
Methods in Teaching Culturally and Linguistically Different Children	Research-based teaching methods for meeting the educational needs of CLDE students will be reviewed. Students will be required to develop appropriate units for used with CLDE students.
Issues in Multicultural Bilingual Special Education	Infusion of multicultural teaching methods in the regular curriculum will be discussed. Students will be provided opportunities to explore strategies for infusing multicultural/bilingual education concepts into the regular curriculum.
Practicum in Multicultural Bilingual Special Education	Students will be provided an opportunity to work in a special education setting under the supervision of a university professor and a special education practitioner. Seminars will provide students an opportunity to engage in discussions of their practicum experiences. 150 clock-hours are required.

BILINGUAL/ESL/SPECIAL EDUCATION MASTERS OF ARTS PROGRAM

COURSE SCHEDULE PROJECTIONS & COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
(36 Graduate Semester Hours)

1996

*Methods of Research -or- *History & Philosophy of Education	*Psychology of Multicultural Learning *Issues in Bilingual/ Multicultural Education	*Culturaliy & Linguistically Different Exceptional Children
SPRING 1996	SUMMER 1996	FALL 1996

1997

*Methods in Language Instruction	*Culturally Different Learning Disabled * Culturally Different Emotionally Disabled	*Intro to ESL
SPRING 1997	SUMMER 1997	FALL 1997

1998

*Second Language Theory Methods & Materials	*Multicultural Assessment Techniques *Methods in Teaching Culturally & Linguistic. Different Excep. Child.	*Practicum in BILSPED * Comprehensive Exam
SPRING 1998	SUMMER 1998	FALL 1998

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